



Habitats

Mississippi River; interior rivers and streams

Iowa Status

common; native

Iowa Range

Mississippi River

Bibliography

Iowa Department of Natural Resources. 2001.
Biodiversity of Iowa: Aquatic Habitats CD-ROM.

river darter

Percina shumardi

Kingdom:	Animalia
Division/Phylum:	Chordata - vertebrates
Class:	Osteichthyes
Family:	Perciformes
Order:	Percidae

Features

The river darter is relatively large and robust for a darter. It reaches lengths up to three inches. It is olive with dark blotches on the sides that form eight to 10 faint bars. There are black spots between the first and second and the last spines of the spiny portion of the dorsal fin, which is completely separated from the soft dorsal fin.

Natural History

The river darter lives in the deeper, lower ends of riffles in moderate to large rivers. It is the most common darter found in the Mississippi River. In Iowa it is restricted to the Mississippi and the extreme lower reaches of its tributaries. It usually is found in areas with gravel, larger rock, or bedrock and lives in water too turbid (muddy) for other darters. It spawns in water 1 1/2 to two feet deep in strong current with scattered rocks or gravel. Little else is known about its reproduction.